

# Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant

## Marketing Efforts

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10/14/2021

## BY THE NUMBERS

### ► ENROLLMENTS

- WRG Enrollments since 2017  
(as of Sept. 1, 2021): **51,594**

### ► COMPLETIONS

- WRG Completions since 2017  
(as of Sept. 1, 2021): **27,612**

### STATE & FEDERAL MARKETING INVESTMENT

Year	Amount
2017	\$500,000
2018	\$600,000
2019	\$750,000
2020	\$700,000
2021	\$2,500,000



# MARKETING TYPES

- ▶ Public Relations & Traditional
  - ▶ Billboards, print, radio, [TV](#)
    - ▶ Indy Recorder, La Voz de Indiana
- ▶ Outreach
  - ▶ CHE's outreach coordinators in field, print materials, events
- ▶ Digital





**INDIANA COMMISSION** *for*  
**HIGHER EDUCATION**



# Digital Marketing: Strategies & Opportunities

Statwax + Indiana Commission for Higher Education

# Since the Beginning Growth & Success





# Digital Ads Since Statwax Began

July 2019 - Present



## 102.81-Million Ad Impressions

WRG ads have been seen by targeted, relevant users within Indiana nearly 103-million times overall.



## 714,164 Clicks to the NLJ Website

Ads have directly generated 55% of all traffic to the website since July 2019.



## 31,076 Submitted Applications

More than 31,000 applications came directly from ads - 31% of the total for NLJ.





# Year-Over-Year Growth

Overall Site Metrics (Aug 1 - July 31)			
	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021
Users	170,024	294,644 (+73.3%)	298,431 (+1.3%)
Conversions	23,245	39,168 (+68.5%)	50,601 (+29.2%)
Assisted Conversions	9,618	13,597 (+41.4%)	15,407 (+13.3%)

Ads Only Metrics (Aug 1 - July 31)			
	2018 - 2019	2019-2020	2020 - 2021
Users	51,863	173,287 (+234.1%)	145,637 (-16.0%)
Conversions	2,549	9,438 (+270.3%)	15,268 (+61.8%)
Assisted Conversions	3,614	6,377 (+76.5%)	6,746 (+5.8%)





# Year-Over-Year Growth

Not reflected: The most recent Aug-Sept 2021 ads performance

- 4,301 applications from ads in just these two months
- Accounted for 49.8% of *all* NLJ applications
- August 2021 had the most ads-driven apps of all time with ~1,800 (300 more than the previous single-month high)

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# Full Digital Coverage

The goal has been to position WRG everywhere digitally that relevant Hoosiers would be reached. The coverage by WRG ads is dominant in comparison to any other higher ed marketing taking place in Indiana.

## Video / Display



Google Ads



## Paid Social



## Paid Search



Google Ads



Bing ads





# Full Digital Coverage

[All](#) [News](#) [Images](#) [Shopping](#) [Videos](#) [More](#) [Tools](#)

About 2,090,000,000 results (0.71 seconds)

Ad · [www.nextleveljobs.org/](http://www.nextleveljobs.org/)

### Next Level Jobs Indiana - Free Training for Hoosiers

We can help you get started on the path toward a new career with free training. Start Now! Next Level Jobs pays for you to be trained for high-demand, high-paying jobs. Indiana Residents Only. Available up to 2 years. Quick Application Process. 125 Certificate Programs. No-Cost Trainin...

#### Available Job Training

Browse Eligible Programs & Careers

There are dozens of eligible jobs.

#### How It Works

NLJ Pays for Qualifying Programs

Learn if You're Eligible

#### FAQ

Answers To Common Questions

Learn How To Get A New Career Today

#### About Next Level Jobs

What is Next Level Jobs?

What is the Workforce Ready Grant?

Next Level Jobs

[LEARN MORE](#)



## Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Sponsored ·



NLJ provides a grant for education programs for Indiana's high-demand fields. You can get new skills with the State of [...See More](#)



NEXTLEVELJOBS.ORG

**Indiana's Workforce Ready Grant**

[LEARN MORE](#)



Indiana Commission for Higher Education  
Sponsored



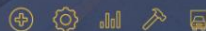
# EMPLOYMENT SITUATION CHANGED? WONDERING WHAT'S NEXT?



**IVY TECH**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



**NextLevel Jobs**  
INDIANA



Next Level Jobs is a program that gives you the opportunity to earn a **FREE** credential from Ivy Tech, thanks to the Workforce Ready Grant, setting you up to take your next step ... [more](#)

[Learn More](#)



Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Sponsored ·



Indiana has tons of well-paying jobs for those with the right training or education.



# Your Career in **Business** Awaits

NEXTLEVELJOBS.ORG/JOB-SEEKER/HOW-IT-WORKS/

**Train For Your Next Level Job**

Indiana has tons of well-paying jobs for those wit...

[Learn More](#)

Share



## Next Level Jobs Indiana



We can help you get started on the path toward a new career with free training. Start Now!



## Next Level Jobs Indiana



### Next Level Jobs



Your Tuition Could Be Free

[Apply Now](#)



Earn Your Free Certificate

[Visit Site](#)



Gain Applicable Technical Skills

[Apply Now](#)



# Rapid Recovery



# Rapid Recovery Messaging



Indiana Commission for Higher Education  
Sponsored

Rapid Recovery expands on the Next Level Jobs program by granting eligibility to more Hoosiers and adding new programs in high-demand fields.

Next Level Jobs is here to stay, but the expansion is temporary. Apply today to take advantage of the Rapid Recovery initiative.



NEXTLEVELJOBS.ORG  
Let's Recover Together | Rapid Recovery  
Indiana is taking our workforce to the next lev...  
Apply Now







# Key Outcomes & Insights

- **Rapid Recovery ads seen more than 6.4-million times**, generating 41,000+ clicks to the Rapid Recovery site and 4,200+ applications
- Expanded reach to **focus on new areas applicable to the program:**
  - Those searching for RR partners/schools (such as WorkOne or Ivy Tech)
  - Users with certificates, diplomas, or associate degrees already
  - Working Hoosiers with behaviors that indicated an opportunity to up-skill (expanding the previous underemployed outreach)
- Split targeting and messaging based on rural, suburb, or city to **better personalize the outreach**



# Ensuring Success

- We leaned on **1+ year of audience insights, search behaviors, and messaging performance** to set up new campaigns for the best chance of success based on proven tactics within Indiana
- Leveraging Statwax's **relationship and knowledge of Indiana-based colleges and universities**, we were able to tap into more data and behavior insights on adult learners, past students, etc. to create more targeted campaigns
- The result: **4,200+ applications at a cost 22% better** than we'd been seeing from ongoing WRG efforts

# Key Learnings, Findings & Data





# Gender Demographics

Impressions - Gender Split (by Digital Channel)			
Channel	Male	Female	Undetermined
Paid Search	27.44%	47.12%	25.45%
Facebook / Instagram	31.41%	67.93%	0.65%
Display / Video	27.61%	27.04%	45.35%

When it comes to initial ads outreach, **males are underrepresented** in terms of who ads are showing to based on behaviors, searches, etc.

Yet males have historically converted to application about 1% more often than females, creating a narrower gap in **applications of 53.42% female vs 46.58% male.**



# Engaging Larger Male Audience

Males are generally underrepresented across higher ed, yet those we *do* engage with are converting at a better rate and cost.

Additional efforts to shift more toward the male audience include:

- Launching ads on Reddit (where **reach and engagement have been ~78.3% male so far**)
- Individual search and social campaigns targeting only a male audience, to balance out the natural inclination of platforms to skew toward females when using only behavior targeting

# New Landing Page Testing

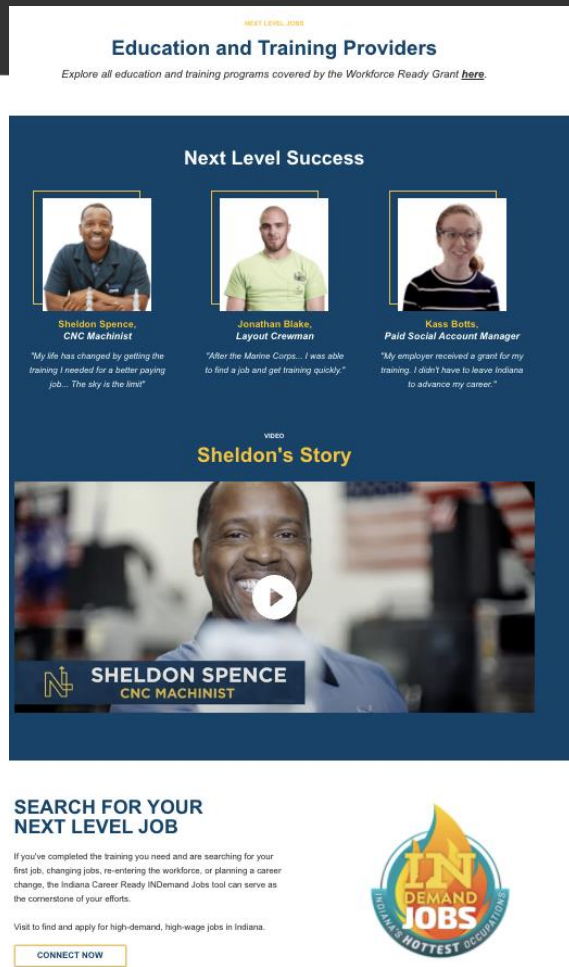
Statwax is now designing and deploying **landing pages for specific traffic.**

Pages are tested against the main website to identify areas of incremental improvement.



## HOW TO APPLY

Applying is easy! Complete the short [online survey](#).  
Not ready to apply? Click [here](#) for answers to frequently asked questions.





# New Landing Page Testing

The first design iteration is **beating the main NLJ website by 1.72%** on conversion rate to applications.

At current monthly ads levels, that new page - if used exclusively for ads - **would have generated an additional 978 applications since August 1.**





# Key Audience Learnings

- Some of the **best-performing audiences**: those who had visited WorkOne locations, those searching for food assistance, and those searching for college application information
- **Lowest-performing among key audience segments** has been those searching for education financial aid
  - With cost considerations being the main obstacle in higher ed right now, this could speak to the need for more money-specific messaging and awareness-building around *what* WRG is
- Highest volume of outreach has come from an audience of **traditionally underserved or underemployed** - lower household income levels, more rural locations, those seeking housing assistance, etc.

# Moving Forward

## New Projects & Opportunities



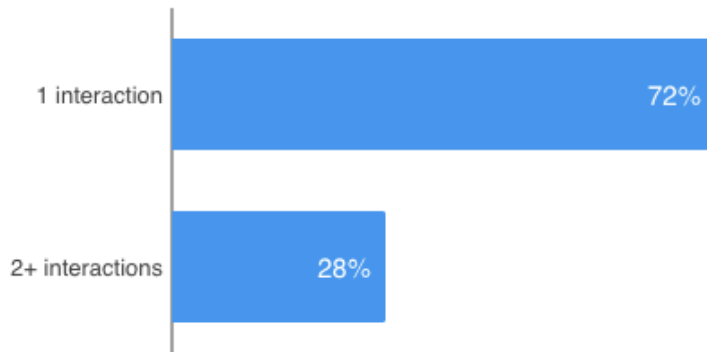


# A Multi-Step Journey

Nearly one-third of applicants coming from ads required *at least* two ad clicks/website visits before deciding to apply.

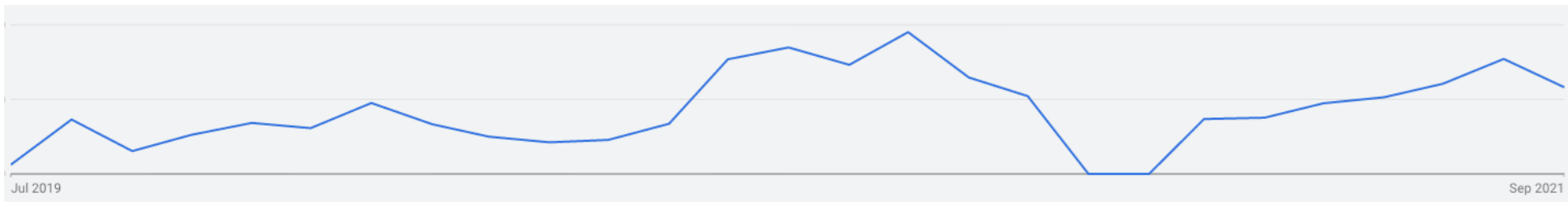
**Takeaway:** leaving ad spend to just targeting brand new users for the first time is leaving a lot on the table. Without continued remarketing and higher investment in multi-touch strategies, data suggests that many users would not ultimately convert.

**28% of your conversion journeys** had at least 2 ad interactions before conversion





# A Multi-Step Journey



*Branded search volume by month since ads began*

Branded search volume has steadily increased to new sustained highs compared to where it was in 2019.

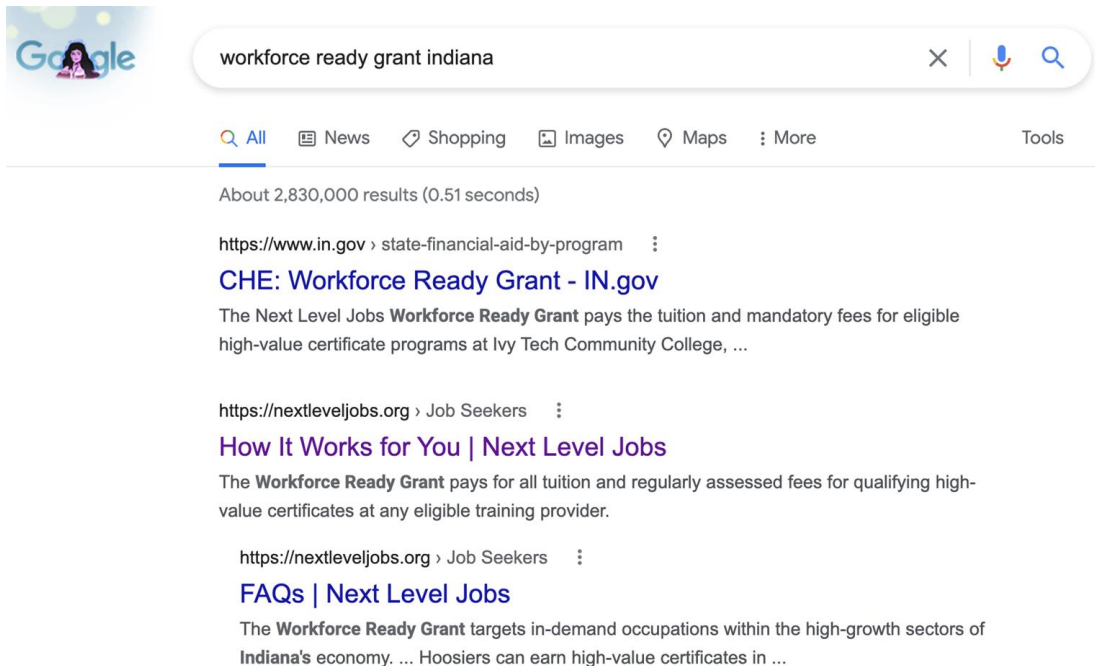
**Takeaway:** higher-funnel efforts like display ads, paid social media, and video ads are driving more interest over time. The result is more users seeking out NLJ or WRG by name thanks to sustained created interest that ads have produced.



# Search Engine Optimization

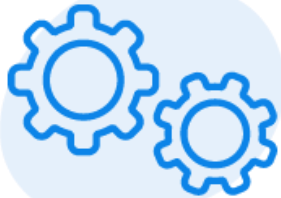
SEO affects the **areas that your website is visible that are *not* paid ads.**

Growing non-paid search traffic by optimizing SEO means **bringing in additional volume at no additional spend**, leading to net overall application growth.





# Search Engine Optimization



*Improve  
technical SEO  
foundations*



*Optimize page  
and user  
experience*



*Develop content  
funnels and  
landing pages*

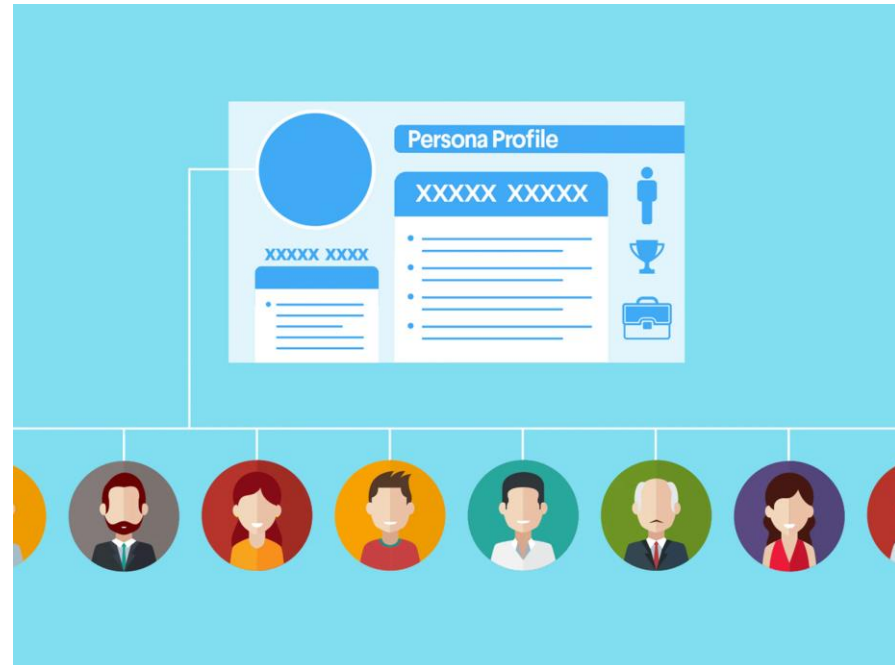


# Persona Building

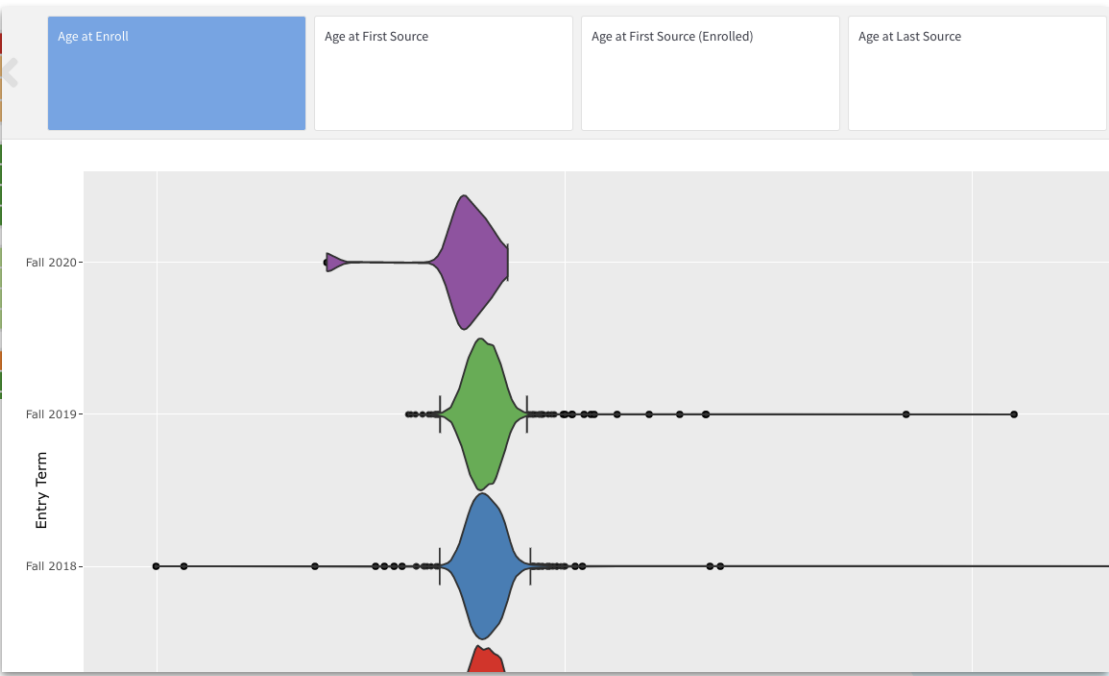
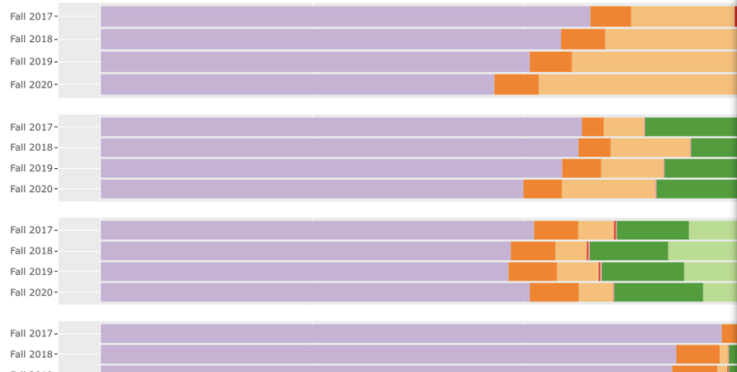
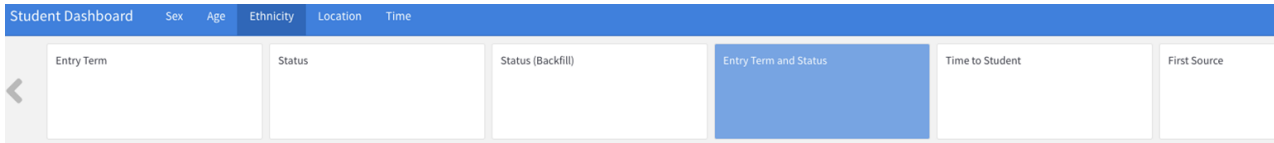
Personas help distill prospective students into buckets of similar behaviors, demographics, and traits.

Knowing the key personas and their makeup means better knowing how to create and optimize targeting of marketing campaigns.

**More personalized marketing = more success at a better cost.**



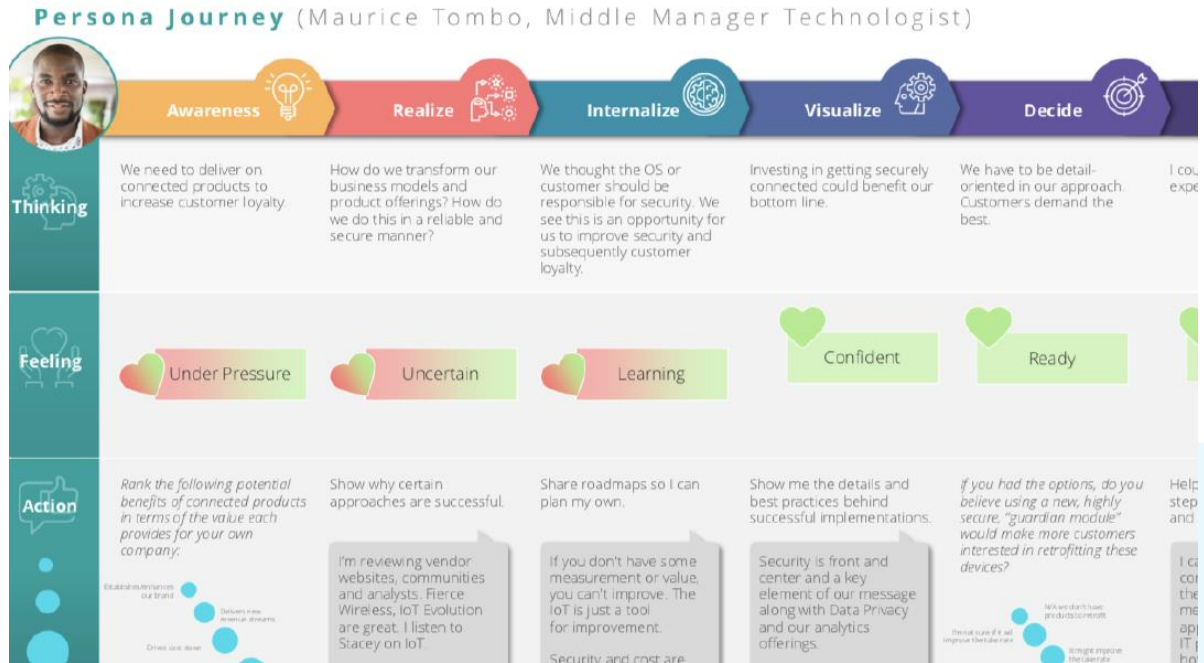




Analysis and modeling of all available data helps build personas based around past applicants and enrollees

# Persona Building

- Analysis looks at these common data and behavior trends to create a singular persona with common thoughts, needs, behaviors, and interests
- All items can be translated into ad tracking settings, ideal messaging, follow-up marketing requirements, and more
- And everything is based around *actual* past applicants and enrollees



# The State of Higher Ed & Marketing





# COVID's Impact & Looking Forward

Higher ed enrollment is on **a one-year decline 7X worse** than the previous year

**Program type preference is driving trends** and marketing needs (associate's vs certificate, etc.)

**1 in 3 prospective students are continuing to delay enrollment plans** (gap year, no college, etc.) despite vaccine availability and reopening plans

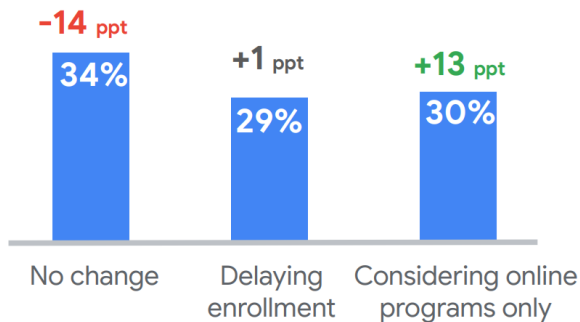
The digital **research journey is changing and expanding** - prospects want different information in different ways than ever before, and pain points to address are changing



### Prospective Student

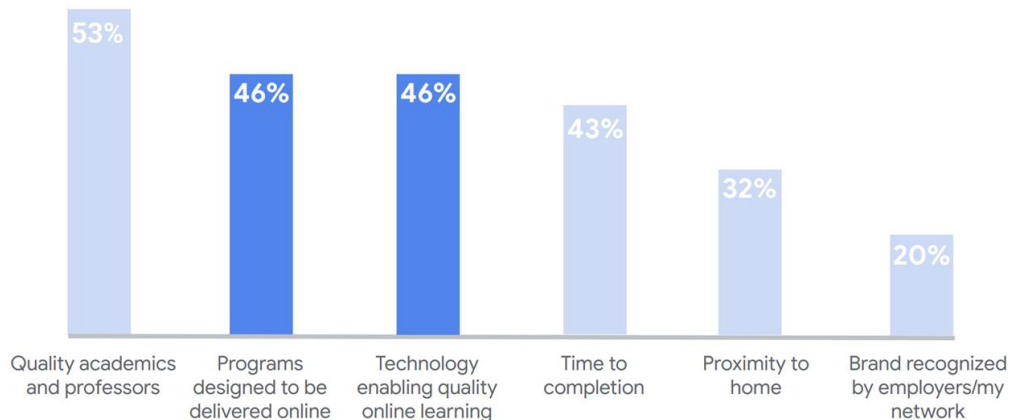
How has Coronavirus (COVID-19) changed your plans to go back to school?

+/- January 2021 v October 2020



### Prospective Student

Beyond program and cost, which factors are important to you now given COVID-19 and your decision to consider enrolling in the future?

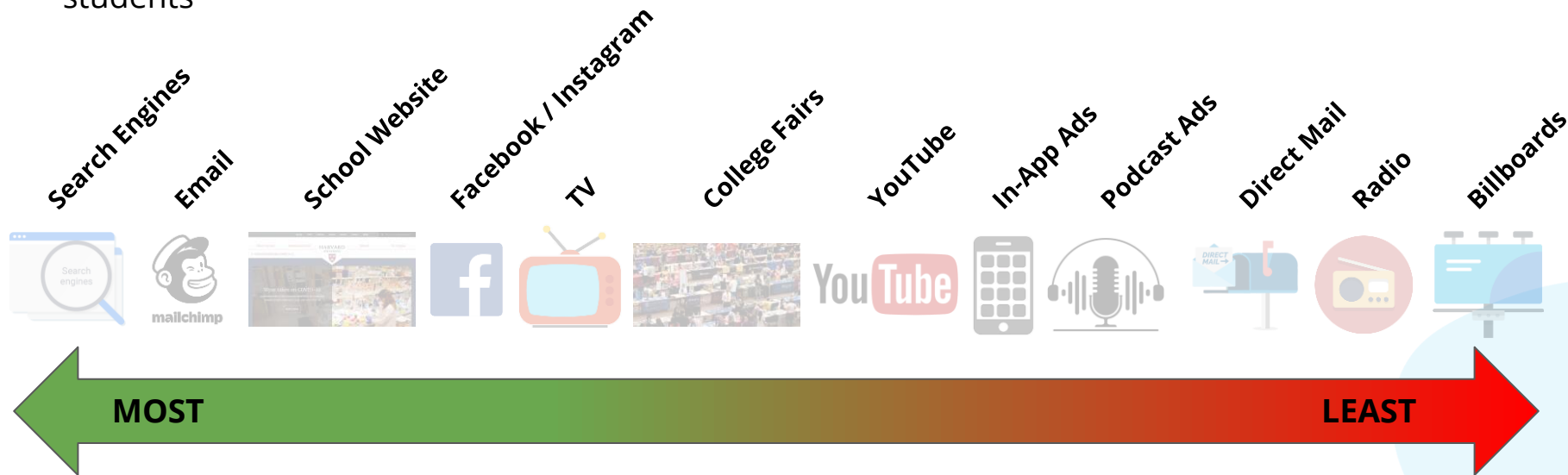


Google Higher Ed Trends Study: **70% of surveyed students desire at least some online modality** even after COVID is past.



# Digital Drives Awareness

A 2019 study looked at the **most- to least-remembered marketing content** among current U.S. students



# A Change in What's Important

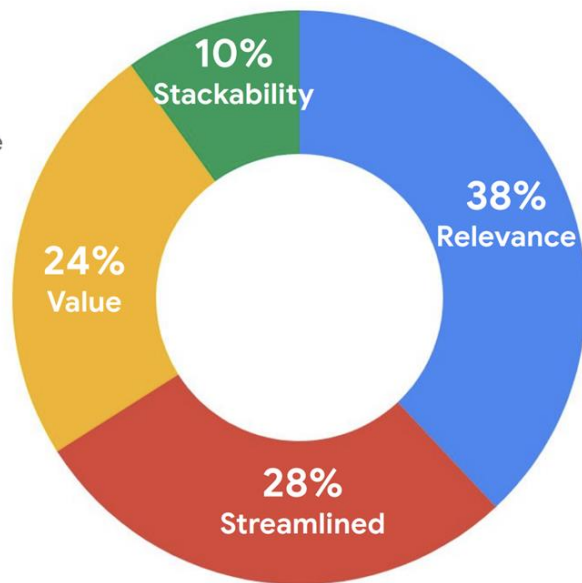
## Google Prospective Student Study: Most Important Factors in Choosing an EDU Program

### Stackability:

>> Would lead to additional education or training in the future

### Value:

>> Better value  
>> More benefit to my job or career advancement



### Relevance:

>> Required in my field of work  
>> Better fit for my personal needs  
>> More applied/relevant to my work

### Streamlined:

>> Faster  
>> Cheaper  
>> More convenient





# A Change in What's Important

**39% of prospective students prefer “skills training”** as their education within the next six months

*24% prefer non-degree credentials*

*23% prefer either Associate's or Bachelor's degrees*

Geographic boundaries are lessening - **EDU searches involving a specific city are down 9% YoY**

Prospects are **searching modality first, program second**

*Searches involving “online” are up 21% YoY*

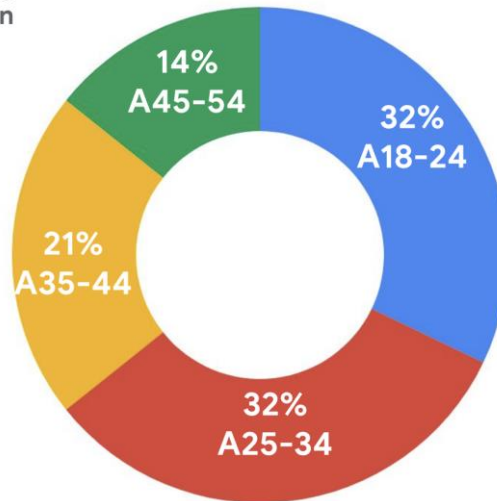
*More Gen-Z prospects search first by academic major than by school name, rankings, or location*



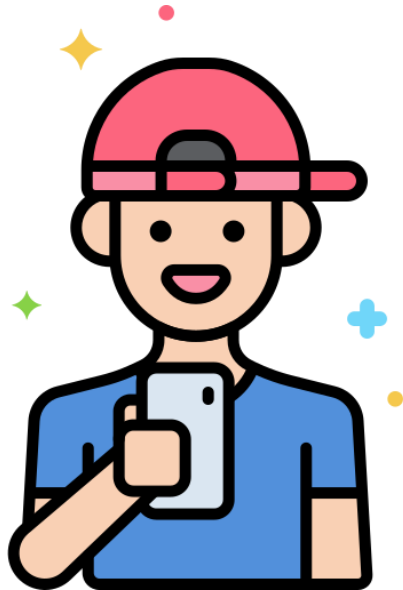
# Tapping into the Adult Market

Google Prospective Student Study: Adults Returning to School in 2021-2022

Share of US Adults planning  
to start / return to school in  
the next year



# IN-Based Audience Research

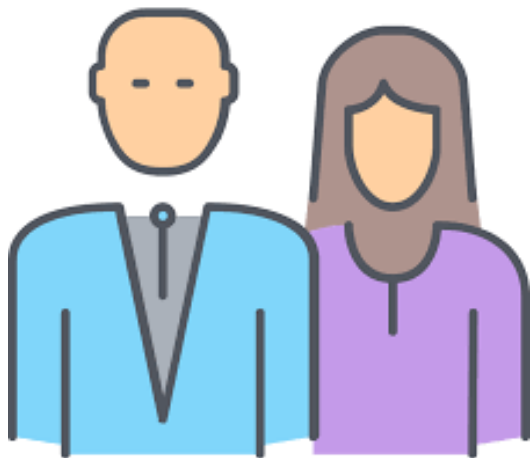


## Generation Z

- Want to be “living in the moment” right now, despite still trying to find their feet and figure out their future
- Cost is a huge barrier to further education
- However, stats about long-term ROI of education will be lost on them, as they aren’t considering that piece in the moment



# IN-Based Audience Research



## Parents

- Cost as a major consideration is heavier in Indiana than nationally among parents
- Receptive to messaging about the “deal” of post-secondary education
- Value family life - for some, education is something that takes their child away from home and must be messaged accordingly



# IN-Based Audience Research



## Adult Learners

- Practicality is a major need in higher ed solutions - many are working their first jobs and over half have children
- Younger members of this group (25-34) align more with Gen Z needs and findings, while the 35+ group aligns more with the Parents research
- The older the adult learner, the more likely they are to value affordability and be impacted by messaging on how Indiana makes edu more affordable



# IN-Based Audience Research

## Takeaways:

- We must engage the parents as well as the students, but through totally separate outreach and campaigns with different messaging and goals
- In our younger audience targeting, we must stress more immediate impacts and values - there is skepticism around the concept of going to school just because it has long-term worth
- Older users (a core focus area for WRG) are more financially-driven when engaging with messaging. Campaigns should continue to push affordability, long-term ROI/potential earnings, etc.



# Thank You!

